

Neighborhood Connections

As described in Chapter Two, the overarching goal behind the preparation of this plan is to add value to the city of Milwaukee. This chapter of the plan considers Downtown’s relationship to other parts of Milwaukee and recommends actions to ensure that improvements in the Downtown “add value” to the rest of the City as well.

- The analysis that follows is based on several assumptions:
- The jobs, services and cultural opportunities that exist downtown should be available to everyone in the metropolitan area.
 - Downtown is interdependent with the remainder of the city and particularly with the neighborhoods closest to it. Neighborhoods benefit from proximity to a healthy Downtown; Downtown benefits from proximity to healthy neighborhoods.
 - There are cultural, arts, entertainment, and retail attractions in Milwaukee’s neighborhoods and Milwaukee’s appeal as a destination is amplified when both Downtown and neighborhoods are marketed to visitors to the city.
 - The sharing of benefits between neighborhoods and Downtown is maximized when real and perceived barriers are removed and travel between neighborhoods and Downtown is facilitated.

This plan recognizes that Downtown does not exist in isolation. Downtown exists because of the services it provides to the rest of the city and to the metropolitan area. It needs the people of Greater Milwaukee to staff its work places, patronize its businesses and cultural institutions, and attend its schools and colleges. Even as the housing recommendations of this plan increase the number of Downtown residents to 27,000 over the next two decades or more, the residential population will be only one-third of the size of the current Downtown workforce. Increasing the residential population will strengthen Downtown but will not reduce its dependence on the larger community.

The analysis considers two categories of neighborhoods: the neighborhoods that are immediately adjacent to Downtown, which are called Gateway Neighborhoods, and the neighborhoods that are centrally located within the city but do not share a boundary with Downtown.

Gateway Neighborhoods

Because of their adjacency to Downtown, the Gateway Neighborhoods are closely identified with it. The boundary between Downtown and these neighborhoods is sometimes vague and particular blocks on the border justifiably may be claimed by both. The Gateway Neighborhoods have their own residential base and development character that give them a separate identity. Map A shows the Gateway Neighborhoods with names that were assigned to them in a recent community identity project of the Department of City Development. Map B shows the commercial areas that serve them. In three of the commercial areas, the merchants and property owners have organized business improvement districts (BIDs) to promote and improve their areas.

Avenues West and Historic King Drive were the focus of recent, joint public-private planning studies. Brady Street recently completed a highly regarded streetscaping project. Marquette

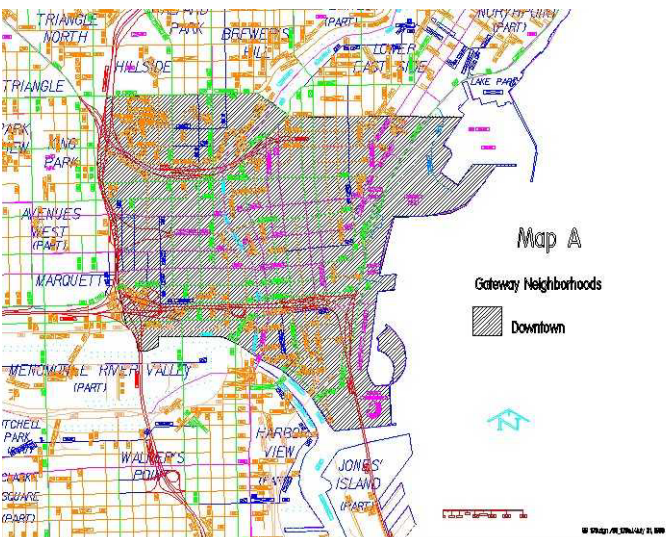


University recently completed and the Milwaukee City Plan Commission and Common Council have endorsed a Campus Identity and Beautification Plan that emphasizes keeping West Wisconsin Avenues as the university's "main street," open to public traffic and linking the campus to Downtown. These planning studies call for the Gateway Neighborhoods to use their proximity to Downtown as a marketing opportunity, to see the population of Downtown visitors and workers as a market for the neighborhoods' stores, restaurants, services, and housing units.

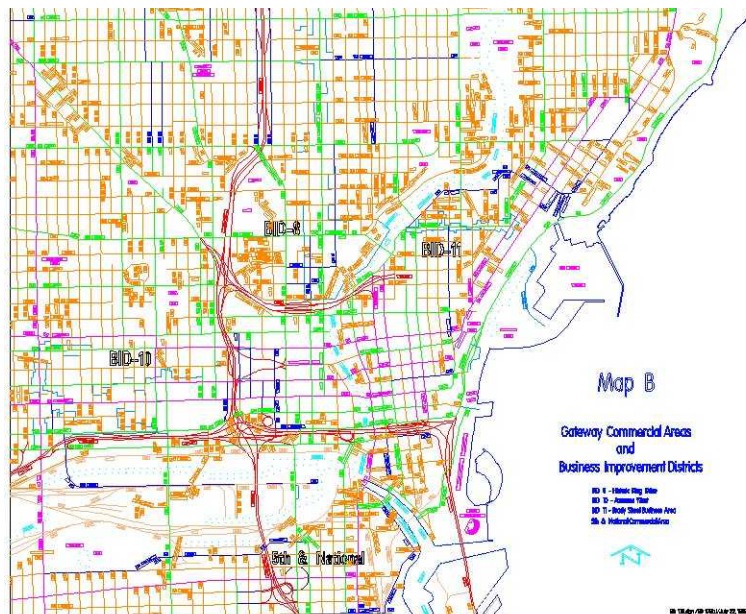
The greatest impediment to the Gateway Neighborhoods' tapping the Downtown market is real or perceived barriers between them and Downtown. For example, in interviews with Downtown and neighborhood representatives and in the public workshops and briefings on the draft Downtown Plan, it was often mentioned that the Park East Freeway was seen as a barrier that separated the Historic King Drive and Brewers Hill neighborhoods from Downtown. Removing that barrier is seen as a way to encourage more visitors, business investment, and potential residents to come to the neighborhoods.

The plan recommends the following actions to remove barriers and maximize connections between the Gateway Neighborhoods and Downtown:

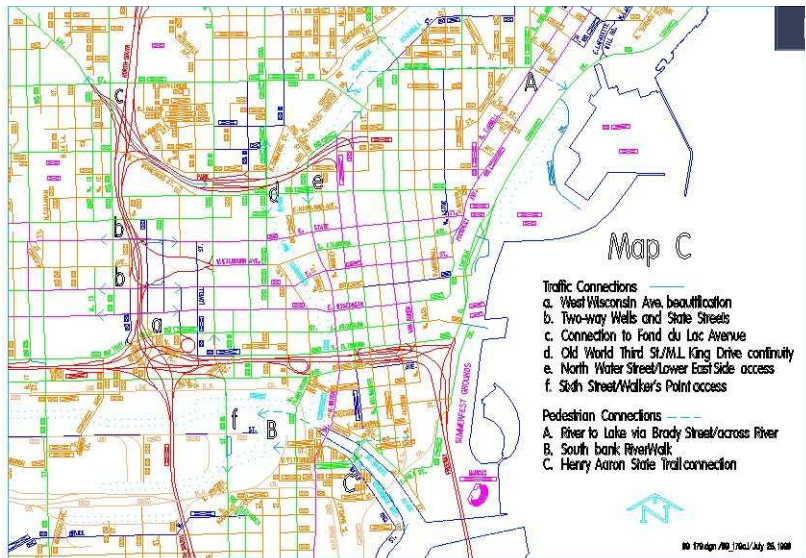
1. The Downtown Plan and other city plans call for changes to major thoroughfares. These improvement projects should be designed in ways that facilitate access between Downtown and the Gateway Neighborhoods. Map C shows connections that need special attention. In most cases these streets also carry bus routes and transit amenities should also be provided.
 - a) On West Wisconsin Avenue, establish a smooth transition between the Marquette University campus and Downtown as part of the implementation of the Campus Identity and Beautification Project.
 - b) Consider establishing two-way operation of West Wells Street and West State Street in the Avenues West and Marquette University Neighborhoods when two-way operation of those streets is begun in the Downtown.
 - c) Maintain a direct connection between West Fond du Lac Avenue and Downtown in the Park East replacement and Hillside Interchange reconstruction projects.
 - d) Create a smooth transition between North Old World Third Street and North Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive as part of the Park East replacement project.
 - e) Maintain the connection to Brady Street and the Lower East Side via North Water Street as part of the Park East replacement project.
 - f) Enhance the connection to the Walker's Point Neighborhood as part of the Sixth Street Viaduct replacement.
2. The Downtown Plan and other city plans call for new pedestrian connections, particularly as part of completion of the RiverWalk. Additional connections should be included.
 - a) The RiverWalk to LakeWalk connection via Brady Street should be included.
 - b) Continue the RiverWalk system along the south bank of the Milwaukee River in Walker's Point.
 - c) Include the connections between the Henry Aaron State Trail in the Menomonee Valley and the



Map A



Map B



Map C

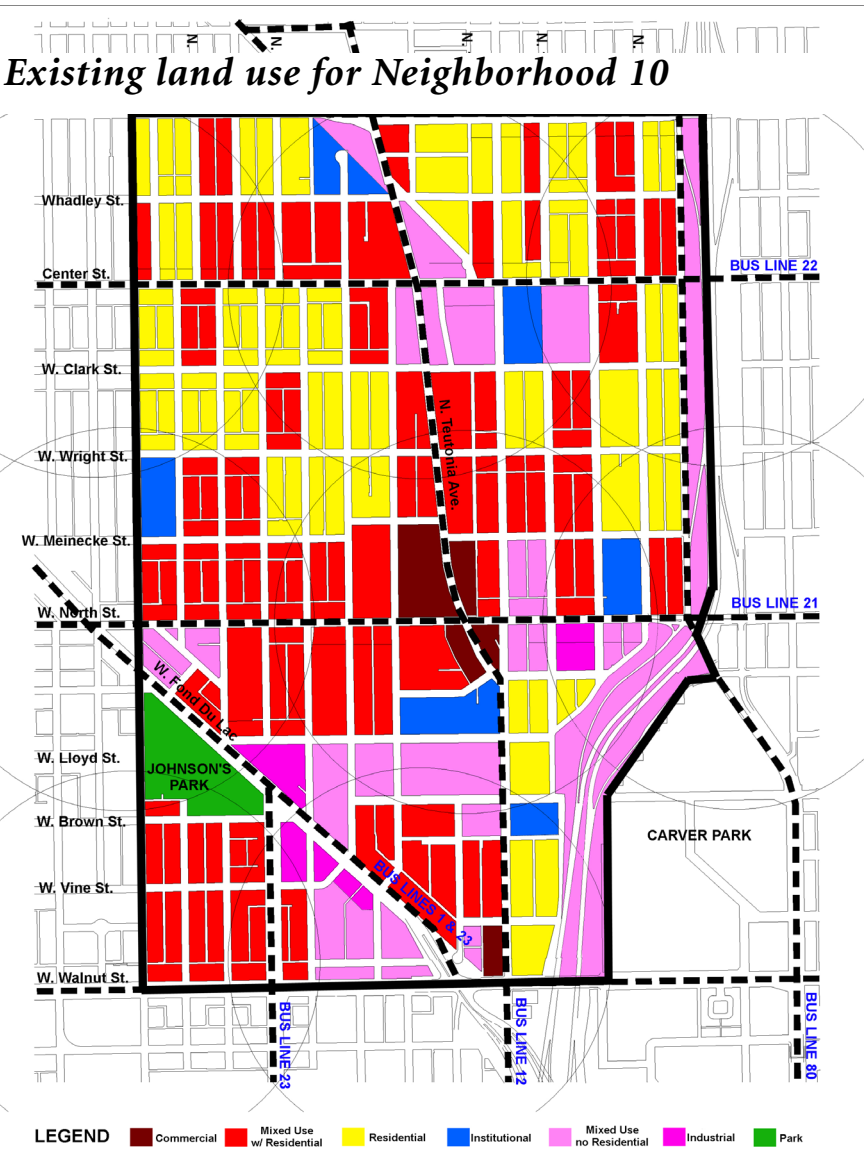
Downtown.
d) As redevelopment of the Park East and Post Office occur, consider additional pedestrian connections across the rivers as part of those developments.

3. The design of new buildings and sites can open vistas or close them, create inviting entrances or intimidating walls. Care should be taken during the design of large redevelopments, particularly the Park East redevelopment, to avoid recreating a perceived barrier between Downtown and Historic King Drive, Brewers Hill, Brady Street and the Lower East Side. Superblock sized parcels should not be created, individual redevelopment parcels should not exceed the size of typical blocks, 300 feet by 600 feet.

4. Implement the Downtown trolley providing greater accessibility to all of the Downtown for everyone. Emphasize the connections between the Citywide bus system and the trolley with new enhanced shelters, signing and schedules.

5. Extend the Downtown trolley to serve immediate adjacent neighborhoods including Marquette University, Walkers Point, King Drive, Brewers Hill and Brady Street. The Brady Street loop is already successful and an excellent prototype.





Neighborhood Strategic Planning Areas

The Community Development Block Grant Program defines the area surrounding Downtown into 17 Neighborhood Strategic Planning Areas. From these surrounding areas two case studies were chosen to determine a methodology for strengthening these areas in a manner which would also benefit Downtown. Neighborhoods 10 and 15 were chosen for land use, bus service and pedestrian precinct analysis.

Review of these two Neighborhood Plans revealed that the existing neighborhood units do not conform to the classic definition of a mixed-use, walkable neighborhood. A classic neighborhood is defined as an area of single and multiple use residential buildings focusing upon a mixed-use, civic and open space core. It can be idealized as a circle defined in area by a five-minute walking distance (1,300 to 1,500 feet) from the core. This distance also applies to the optimum walking distance to transit stops (pedestrian precinct). The classic neighborhood is approximately 150 to 160 acres in size.

Analysis reveals that these areas are actually large residential districts; some could contain eight to 10 classic neighborhoods. According to this definition of a classic neighborhood there are 185 possible neighborhoods within the 17 Neighborhood Strategic Planning Area. These are hypothetically shown on the following map.

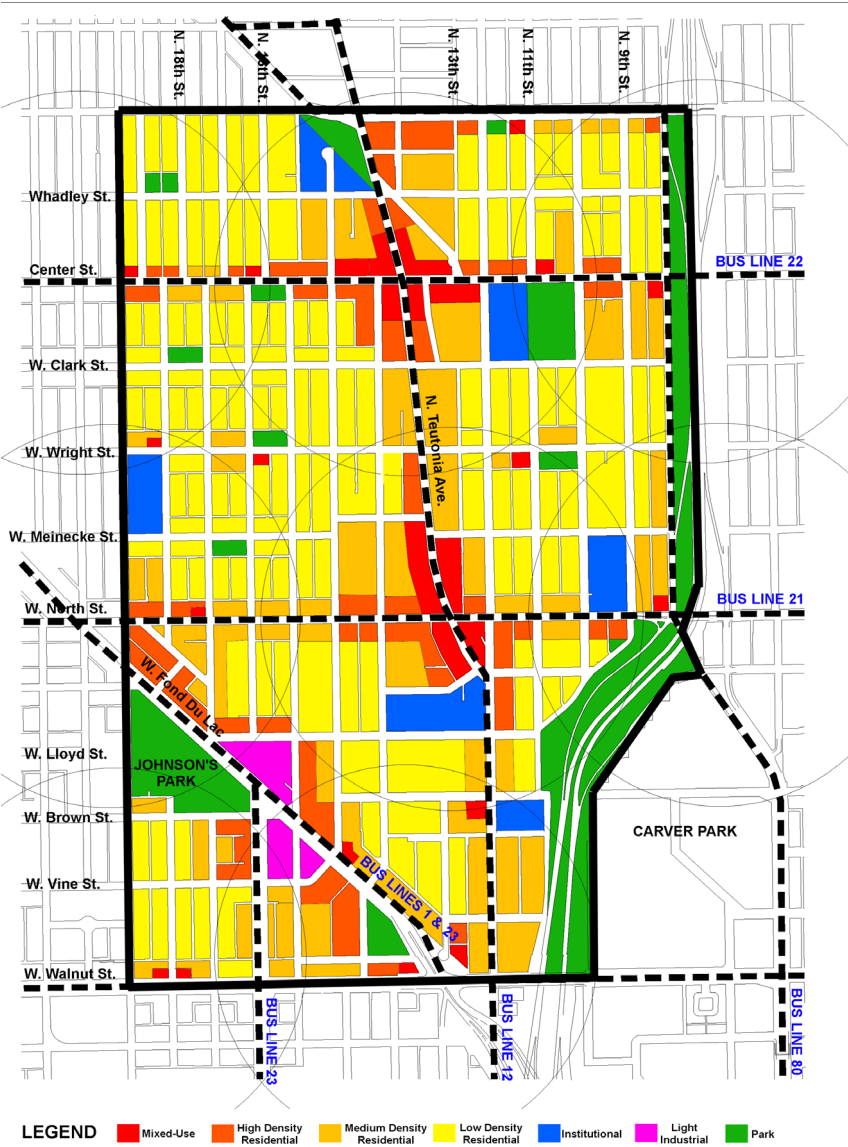
The existing land uses within Areas 10 and 15 were analyzed. Of particular significance was the location of the commercial/retail uses. The traditional neighborhood has a center/core where retail/commercial uses are concentrated. Field visits to Areas 10 and 15 revealed the existence of concentrated, historic mercantile architecture. This location and character testifies to the prior existence of significant, thriving neighborhood retail and social centers linked to Downtown by a streetcar system. Further analysis revealed that the "main streets" have been widened and the sidewalks narrowed. These two actions indicate the supremacy of the automobile and a diminished respect for the pedestrian. This change in priorities has undermined the cohesion of these centers. Another repercussion disseminates non-residential uses from the core into residential areas further undermining a walkable assemblage of uses.

Downtown will be more successful if it is well connected to and supported by healthy neighborhoods. The following methodology provides an analytical process for recreating healthy neighborhoods.

First the existing bus lines were mapped. Then existing land uses were overlaid on the bus lines. By applying the ideal neighborhood template first to those locations with a bus line and commercial land use concentrations a pattern began to emerge. The bus lines serve many of the traditionally defined neighborhood centers. When the pedestrian precinct circle was applied to the remaining areas, it became clear that most were served by a bus line within a five to eight minute walk. The bus lines are well located.

Unfortunately many of the bus lines did not provide direct access to the Downtown. Patrons must incur long trips with one or more transfers to reach Downtown. Further analysis revealed that the headway and the complexity of the system make it difficult and cumbersome to use. Also, the image of bus transit, particularly the bus stops does not make it

Proposed land use for Neighborhood 10



an entirely positive experience. The type of vehicles, stops, location, and routes need to be reevaluated to best serve every neighborhood as designated on the "Neighborhood Map."

Overlaying the bus lines on the land uses indicates that many of the pedestrian precincts do not have a clearly defined core. These areas will have to be reconstituted in order to evolve into a transit-oriented neighborhood. In areas without a core, some retail, a small park, transit stop and improvement to the pedestrian realms are recommended.

Adopting the neighborhood overlay concept (defined size with mixed-use core) and one or more of the linkage recommendations, every neighborhood within the 17 Strategic Planning Areas can be enhanced by the Downtown and the Downtown will be enhanced by the neighborhoods.

Restructuring the connections to Downtown is required. This can take several forms. General recommendations for identifying and reconstituting neighborhoods are provided:

1. Redefine classic neighborhoods and pedestrian precincts based upon the five-minute walking distance. The center of each neighborhood should contain some mixed-use buildings and a transit stop.
2. Mixed and multiple-use commercial cores should be located where two bus lines intersect, particularly when mixed-use retail currently exists there.
3. Between the mixed-use cores both sides of significant streets with transit should be edged with medium-density residential uses.
4. Maintain existing institutional locations and uses.
5. Create more parks, particularly at the neighborhood scale.
6. Recreate traditional streetscapes.
7. Increase services and shorten headway on critical lines. Improve bus stops and pedestrian realms in neighborhood areas.
8. As redevelopment of the Park East Freeway and the Post Office occur, implement the City room multi-modal transfer facilities thereby making the connections to all of the Downtown easier and quicker.
9. Implement the Satellite Accessed Transit System, an "on demand" van service that is neighborhood friendly.
10. Implement the streetcar network. This provides a circulator for Downtown that is able to carry significantly more passengers at lower operating costs than the trolleys. The streetcar can be extended to the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee and up Fond Du Lac Avenue connecting the Downtown to many additional neighborhoods, educational facilities and job opportunities.

Adopting the neighborhood overlay concept (defined size with mixed-use core) and one or more of the linkage recommendations, every neighborhood within the 17 Strategic Planning Areas can be enhanced by the Downtown and the Downtown will be enhanced by the neighborhoods.

Existing land use for Neighborhood 15



Proposed land use for Neighborhood 15



Implementation

The implementation program for the plan has three parts: adoption and dissemination, regulatory review and the pursuit of the catalytic projects.

Adoption and Dissemination: the main goal of the plan is to influence private sector decisions regarding Downtown development. It is recommended that, through the existing partnership that sponsored the plan, the plan (or summary of it) would be widely distributed to property owners and potential developers so that they will be aware of the types and pattern of development that will foster a more vital Downtown. It is also recommended that the Milwaukee City Plan Commission adopts the Downtown Plan as part of the city’s Comprehensive Plan. This action will provide formal status to the Plan and establish it as an official guide for public decision making.

Regulatory Review: Upon adoption of the Plan, the Department of City Development should update the City’s Downtown zoning and other land use regulations to conform to the Plan. The Department should also prepare design guidelines applicable to the Downtown development projects that are subject to discretionary review, such as projects within redevelopment areas.

The Catalytic Projects: The implementation of some of the Phase One projects has begun; implementation of the remaining Phase One projects should be started immediately. The Phase Two Contingency Projects represent sites that are not now ready for redevelopment, but may become available in one to two years. The Department of City Development should continue to monitor these sites so as to be able to guide owners or developers at the appropriate time.



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